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and his mother was very careful to avoid holding food over him, as any food that touched his head must be discarded. My informant Victoria inadvertently carried sweet potatoes in her child's hat and was obliged to throw them away because they had come in indirect contact with the child's head. When a child was old enough to marry, his head was no longer sacred.

Modern children have a carefree existence, perhaps not very different from that of old days. They gather near the beach and spend the entire day playing or swimming in the sea. They are particularly fond of riding and are excellent horsemen from an early age. Some of them accompany their parents in shore fishing, and I knew a little girl 11 years old who caught fish with a small spear. Young children help their parents, and many fathers are pleased to rid themselves of all work and to transmit it to their sons.

SECLUSION

Legends tell of girls who were kept in seclusion (*huru*) inside huts so that they might acquire a fair complexion. When they appeared in public later, they aroused great admiration for the whiteness of their skin. According to one popular Easter Island tale, the girl in seclusion was daily washed (*hopu*), deloused (*aruke kutu*), combed (*harihari*), stained (*akui*) with turmeric and red earth, and her clitoris was stretched (*haro matatuu*) so that it would be long and hanging.

Easter Islanders pointed out to me two caves in Poike which were said to have been inhabited by *neru*, boys and girls who were separated according to sex and were secluded by their parents in caves where they lived for years. They were probably of chiefly families and, as in Mangareva, were isolated in order to become white and stout and to manifest by their appearance the distinguished position of their families. Attendants of their own sex cared for them. Their parents brought them food, and it is said that during the smallpox epidemic of 1863 many of the *neru* died of starvation because there was no one left to feed them. They lived in idleness and allowed their nails to grow long. It may be recalled that the wooden hand, purchased by G. Forster (83, vol. 1, pp. 582-583) on Easter Island and given by him to the British Museum has long nails, thus proving the accuracy of at least part of the tradition. The *neru* sometimes appeared at feasts but stayed a little apart from other people. The fact that the secluded boys and girls lived in chastity induced the natives of later times to translate the word *neru* as virgin, nun, or women observing celibacy. The following songs refer to the *neru*:

Ka huru koe, neru e, i te ana.	You are secluded, O *neru*, in the cave.
Tautau ipu kiea o nga neru.	Hanging is the gourd with red ocher of the *neru*.
Tuai era ka huru koe, neru e.	You have been secluded for a long time, O *neru*.
A te manava he mate,	I am in love,
Ka huru koe, neru e,	You are secluded, O *neru*,
Ka huru kataia ritorito.	Being secluded you have become white.

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These spirits were sometimes amiable and well disposed toward certain men. Natives told both Routledge (194, p. 237) and me of a man whose spirit dug his potato field for him every night. Magicians, especially sorcerers, were served by spirits who were their familiars. The servant-spirits would enter a man whom their master wished to kill or would leave their victim if ordered to do so. They would unveil the future, and foretell the issue of wars or the results of the annual egg races at Orongo.

Probably most of the spirits were mischievous and fond of playing tricks on men. Routledge believes that they were kind or harmful depending upon whether or not they were well fed. However, offerings of food were probably made only to well-known gods or to spirits having distinct personalities. Probably the tempers of the minor demons were unaffected by the conduct of men toward them.

The name *akuaku*, now used indiscriminately for lesser gods and spirits, must have meant originally only ghosts or spirits of the dead, although it is not found elsewhere in Polynesia with this meaning. Desmedt (59, p. 135) considers the Easter Island term *akuaku* cognate with the Mangarevan *akuaku*, which means "thin, speaking only of men and women." This parallel is supported by the Easter Island idea in which ghosts resemble emaciated men.

Akuaku entered the *niuhi* which were ferocious, half-legendary sharks or other dangerous sea animals. In this form they killed people. My informant probably rationalized this old belief by telling me that only bad men were prey of shark spirits. The *akuaku* also caused diseases and were expelled by priests to save their patients.

Spirits of the dead had all the features of the living, but they were emaciated, had protruding bones, and their bowels could be seen in their sunken abdomens. In a word, they were prototypes of the famous wooden images of Easter Island. Such was the appearance of the two *akuaku* whose images and culture hero Tuu-ko-ihu fixed forever in wood (p. 260). Such is still the aspect of the dead when they manifest themselves in dreams. A girl whom we knew well told us that in a nightmare she had seen her grandfather nodding to her. When he turned his face toward her, she noticed that he was half-rotted and that his bowels, in an advanced state of putrefaction, were visible.

Ghosts were especially terrifying and Roussel (190, p. 495) writes: "They seemed to fear very much the haunting souls. Very often they came for me to drive away these malignant spirits of their fathers or mothers who frightened them and tore at their bowels." Even now the *akuaku* interfere in the daily life of Easter Islanders. A girl who was attending our camp and who had been to the well to draw water came back shivering and white, telling us that an *akuaku* had taken the pail she had left on the edge of the

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girls fell in love with him and he slept with them. In the morning Paterangi got up and left the house, then nobody saw that he had an ugly face. He used to return at night, but he always left in the morning and stayed in his house the entire day. 539

The following month, the girls said, "When Paterangi Heikena comes and lies down asleep, let us conceal his breechcloth so that he will not be in such a hurry to leave in the morning. Let us hide his breechcloth." At night, Paterangi came and sang with his beautiful voice the song called *ate-atua* or *koro-kaka-opo*. Then he closed his eyes and fell asleep. A girl removed his breechcloth and hid it. At dawn Paterangi searched for it, but could not find it. When day came, the girls saw his ugly face. They said, "Oh, girls, this man we fell in love with is not handsome." Paterangi was ashamed that the girls had seen his ugly face. The girls spat at the ugly Paterangi Heikena though his voice was wonderful.

The Good Doctor

In a battle a man had been wounded. After one month his intestines, which had been cut, had not healed. An expert doctor heard about this. He pulled out the sinews of a rat's tail. He went to the patient's bedside and noticed that the sweet potatoes he had eaten could not reach his anus. So he cut and threw away the portion of the intestines which were in bad condition. He put the tail of the rat in the place where the pieces had been removed. The man recovered and was healthy again.

Tupeti, the Successful Farmer

There was a girl called Vai-ira-ranga-a-tino-ngerengere, famous for her beauty. She lived near Ahaha-o-uta. She went to a feast (*koro*) at Ori where she saw a plantation of sugar cane. She asked, "To whom does this sugar cane belong?" Another woman said, "To Tupeti." She then asked, "To whom do these sweet potatoes belong?" "To Tupeti." "To whom do these yams belong?" "To Tupeti." "To whom do these banana trees belong?" "To Tupeti." "To whom do these chickens belong?" "To Tupeti." "To whom does this house belong?" "To Tupeti."

The girl fell immediately in love with this man though he was ugly. She married him on account of all this food and all the good things that he had.

The Battle of the Islands

The four islands, Marotiri, Motu-nui, Motu-iti and Motu-kaokao, were all under the village of Orongo. Motu-nui, Motu-iti and Motu-kaokao had a fight with Marotiri and forced it to retreat. That was a hard fight and Marotiri got so tired that it ran away and established itself off Pui, where it remained alone. The three other islands abandoned the pursuit and returned where they are now.

TABLETS

RONGORONGO MEN

The famous wooden tablets of Easter Island, covered with hieroglyphs, are known as *kohau rongorongo*. This has been erroneously translated as "talking" or "intelligent wood", after the original interpretation by Bishop Tepano Jaussen who divided the word *kohau* into two elements (*ko hau*) and interpreted them thus: "It is a *hau* (hibiscus wood) intelligent." The Bishop ignored the fact that *kohau* is a single word meaning stick, staff, the stem of a plant, or the shaft of a lance. The word *rongorongo* is a complement (*te kohau rongorongo*, the stick of the *rongorongo* men), as evidenced 196 212

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196 by the use of other substantives to indicate the nature of a particular tablet 212 (*kohau o te ranga, kohau o te pure*).

As already mentioned (p. 137), the chants associated with the tablets were 212 recited by learned men or bards called *tangata rongorongo*. Reading of the tablets or chanting from them was taught in special huts, comparable to the 533 schools of learning (*whare wananga*) of the Maori. At Te Hare-titaha in 872 Anakena I was shown stone curbs which were supposed to be remains of the most famous school for *rongorongo* men. There were similar houses in other districts. The atmosphere and the methods in these houses of learning were described by some informants on the authority of old men now dead. Unfortunately these traditions are colored by details of the missionary school system:

[346] The school houses were open sheds with thatched roofs. In the morning the children waited outside the house until they were told by the teacher to enter. To the teacher's salute of *maira* they answered *kokoea*. Each student knelt before a flat stone (*maea rango*), which served as a writing desk. The assistant instructor (*te pahu*) counted the children to find out whether any were missing. The teacher started the lesson by reciting [524] a prayer from a tablet. Then the children were taught to make string figures, each of which was associated with a chant that they must memorize. There were chants for love, for the dead, for saving people from dying, for addressing noblemen, and for the multiplication of birds and fish.

[824] Banana leaves were used as copy books and on them the pupils practiced the engraving of signs with a sharp bone from the frigate bird (*makohe*). Te Haha said the copy books were sheaths from the banana trunk (194, p. 214).

According to Routledge, Te Haha was taught by King Nga-ara, but Charli Teao, the nephew of Te Haha, told me that his uncle had been trained by Taki, another uncle of Charli. Taki had been taught by Ngangiriva. Te Haha described King Nga-ara as "holding a tablet in one hand and swaying from side to side as he recited. Besides giving instruction, he inspected the candidates prepared by other professors, who were generally their own sons; he looked at their *kohau* and made them read, on which he either passed them, clapping if they did well, or turned them back. Their sponsors were made per- [875] sonally responsible. If the pupils acquitted themselves creditably, presents of *kohau* were made to the teachers; if the youth failed, the tablets of the instructor were taken away" (194, p. 245).

527 Besides the annual gathering and chanting by *rongorongo* men at Orongo 533 during the feast of the bird-man, these learned bards met once a year at Ana- 545 kena to chant for the king. People came from all over the island to hear them "read" from the tablets. This public "reading" must be considered as a general contest between *rongorongo* men and a test of the ability of each. [613 Visitors arrived with *huhu* (sticks with feathers) to which turmeric was tied, as a courtesy to the king. The food to be consumed during the feast was 293] supplied by the king, who was aided by people of neighboring districts. Te Haha described to Routledge (194, pp. 245-246) one such gathering, which he attended in his youth:

Both King Nga-ara and his son, Kaimako . . . sat on seats made of tablets, and each had a tablet in his hand; they wore feather hats, as did all the professors. The